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CPYRGHT *He May Have Been Our Best*

Every country of any size has its master spy. The American who best fits that title may still be some unobtrusive person working behind the scenes somewhere. But until a more qualified candidate for the title is exposed, Allen W. Dulles, who died Wednesday at the age of 75, seems the likely choice.

Dulles was an extraordinary operative in his own name in World War II. The story of how he planted a spy in the Nazi foreign office ranks as one of the greatest espionage tales of all time. But it is as the man who ran the Central Intelligence Agency for eight years in the Eisenhower administrations that he will be best remembered. That was the period in which the CIA probably experienced its greatest growth and undertook its most daring adventures.

That not all of them turned out well wasn't necessarily Allen Dulles' fault. In the spying business, as in sports, you win some and you lose some. Everyone remembers the U2 fiasco that gave Nikita Khrushchev an opportunity to break up the Paris summit conference. The blame for that prop-

erly should be placed at the CIA's door.

It is a reasonable conclusion, too, that the CIA was chiefly to blame for the disastrous Bay of Pigs affair. But if it was the CIA's fault, Allen Dulles was fairly successful in concealing the fact. Three days after this misadventure he appeared before a group of some 200 newsmen in the State Department auditorium. When he was asked whether it was the CIA's fault he reflected for a few moments and then blandly replied: "I can assure you that the upper echelons were in complete possession of all the information."

No one pressed him for a more complete answer. But even in a situation as touchy as this one was, Dulles was imperturbable. He was, as the British say, unflappable.

It would be easy to condemn Dulles as inept because of the known failures of his agency. But it would be dangerous and unfair, since its successes can't be disclosed or exploited. Considering his own remarkable achievements, the public may safely conclude that the CIA was more than a moderately successful organization under his direction.